

GUIDELINES: Extreme Weather Conditions

LONDON

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS
ONTARIO**



Only Coaches and Managers have authority to cancel a practice due to weather conditions. Please email london.pr@specialolympicsontario.ca to post a cancellation on Facebook and online.

The following is a guide to assist SOOL coaches in dealing with extreme weather conditions that may occur throughout the year.

The goal of SOOL is to ensure a safe athletic environment for our athletes, and to avoid putting them or our volunteers at risk. It is the responsibility of the **Head Coach** to follow these guidelines and to use common sense to protect our athletes and volunteers.

If at any time, the City has issued any of the following warnings, Special Olympics activities for that day are to be cancelled. These include:

- Travel advisories against unnecessary travel within the City due to poor weather conditions
- Health advisories issued due to poor air quality, recommending outside activities be restricted
- Bus service cancellations due to weather

EXTREME HOT AND COLD WEATHER CONDITIONS

Cold Weather

If temperature with the wind chill is **lower than -25C degrees**, outside activity is not recommended. The following steps must be taken in such circumstances where the activity is deemed necessary, to minimize the effects of cold weather:

- Program situation (regular weekly practices/games) – the outside activity should be cancelled and modifications made to train indoors. This decision is the responsibility of the Head Coach
- Competition situation – pertaining to situations, particularly provincial qualifiers, all possible precautions shall be taken, but should not be limited to, the following:
 - Marshalling should occur indoors/heated tents
 - Non-essential outdoor activities should be cancelled
 - Adequate time between events should be taken to allow athletes, coaches and volunteers to warm-up

These precautions will be the responsibility of the Competition Host in conjunction with the Head Coaches in attendance and the RCMT or SOO rep on site.

Hot Weather

If temperature **exceeds +30C degrees**, outside activity is not recommended.

The following steps must be taken in such circumstances where the activity is deemed necessary, to minimize the effects of the heat.



Hot Weather (cont'd)

Program situation (regular weekly practices/games) – the outside activity should be cancelled and modifications made to train indoors. This decision is the responsibility of the Head Coach.

- Competition situation – pertaining to situations, particularly provincial qualifiers, all possible precautions shall be taken, but should not be limited to, the following:
- Shaded or indoor areas must be provided
- Marshalling shall occur under tents/shaded areas
- Non-essential outdoor activities should be cancelled
- Water will be provided to ensure adequate consumption

These precautions will be the responsibility of the Competition Host in conjunction with the Head Coaches in attendance and the RCMT or SOO rep on site.

WEATHER WARNINGS, THUNDERSTORMS, ETC.

General

In the event a weather warning has been issued, it is up to the Head Coach whether to continue with a planned athletic activity based on up to date weather forecasts for the area. This would apply to winter storm warnings, tornado warnings, thunderstorm warnings wind warnings or any other related weather warning. Again, safety of our athletes is always to be the priority and our goal is to avoid putting our athletes at risk. If the recommendation from weather reports is to stay home, the sporting activity is to be cancelled.

Simple wet weather conditions or warnings are up to the individual head coach of each sport to continue with or cancel.

Thunderstorms

According to Environment Canada, "If you can hear thunder, you are within lightning striking distance." Therefore, if during a sporting event, thunder is heard or lightning is seen, take shelter immediately, preferably in a safe building or all-metal vehicle (not convertible top) or in a low-lying area. If you are in your car, do not park under tall objects that could topple, and do not exit your vehicle if there are downed power lines nearby.

If you find yourself stuck outside with no other safe option, keep away from trees and other hazards, and drop to your knees, bend forward so your head is lower than your back (but not touching the ground) and put your hands on your thighs. Do not lie flat on the ground. Remember that even if you do this, being exposed outside during a thunderstorm with lightning can lead to serious danger, injury and even death.

Summary

The preceding guidelines are meant to make decision making for weather cancellations simpler for coaches. Remember safety comes first, so if in doubt in a particular situation, it is probably better to cancel the activity than continue.